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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [AORC](#) [EAID](#) [WFP](#)
SUBJECT: WFP LIST D CHAIR

REF: STATE 6001
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11. (SBU) Summary. On January 13, Danish Ambassador Poul Skytte Christoffersen, 2005 President of the World Food Program (WFP) Executive Board and chair of WFP's List D countries (OECD), convened his last session as List D Chair. The meeting was called to appoint a new List D chair. The United States led a discussion on the criteria for selection, calling for a consensus candidate, a geographical rotation outside of Europe (as a European has held the position for three consecutive terms and four times in all since the inception of the current WFP Executive Board in 1996), and that the position be open to a non-ambassadorial level candidate. The non-European nations of Japan, Australia and Canada echoed U.S. concerns, primarily highlighting the consensus candidate.

12. (SBU) Later, the Canadians suggested a compromise in which they and the Netherlands would serve as joint conveners with the understanding that the Dutch Ambassador would become 2007 Executive Board President. We replied that we saw a lot of problems with this proposal but would consult to get Washington's view. Action Requested: Mission requests Department and USAID response to Canadian proposal during the week of January 23. End Summary and Action Request.

13. (U) Background: Prior to the meeting on January 13, Christoffersen called Ambassador Hall on December 21, 2005, to inform of his impending departure from post and to propose Netherlands Ambassador Ewald Wermuth as his replacement. In that and subsequent discussions with Hall and DCM Cleverley, USMISSION UN ROME indicated that it was time for rotation out of Europe as a European held the chair for three consecutive terms, and that the U.S. would promote a consensus candidate outside of Europe. The Ambassador spoke to both Canada and Australia as possible candidates.

14. (U) During the List D consultation, Ambassador Hall spoke first by proposing additional criteria to those proposed at the beginning of the meeting when Christoffersen said the incumbent should be from an Executive Board member country, be in Rome for the next two years, and have ambassadorial rank. The Ambassador emphasized that the individual be a consensus candidate and argued for geographical rotation. He noted that every political body passes the seat around to be fair to all members. On the ambassadorial level criterion, the Ambassador stated that such a rule would exclude the ability of so many members who are actively present but who are not ambassadors. He referred to the Peruvian Miguel Barretto, who was WFP Executive Board President from 2003-2004 and was neither an ambassador nor a permanent representative, but who represented WFP well.

15. (U) In quick succession: Australia echoed how important it is to support a consensus candidate more so than an ambassador level position. The outcome to strive for is a consensus candidate. Japan agreed generally with the idea of rotation. And Canada supported a consensus candidate, stating that the principle of rotation is fundamental in the multilateral system and should be supported here as well, but that it did not trump all. The European members present were noticeably silent and did not intervene.

16. (SBU) Christoffersen followed by conducting a series of individual consultations with each country. In meeting with the U.S., he told Ambassador Hall that there was some sympathy on the rotation issue, but several European members had expressed that rotation also be applied to the WFP Executive Director position. He inquired if there was a possibility for the U.S. to concede on List D and accept

Netherlands Ambassador Ewald Wermuth. The Ambassador replied that: 1) the Europeans have had the List D chair for three consecutive terms and geographical rotation is an agreed principle in the UN system; 2) adding the Executive Director position to the mix was not appropriate to discuss in this forum; and 3) the U.S.'s bottom line is that it must be from outside of Europe, and Canada or Australia were possible willing candidates.

17. (U) With the meeting inconclusive, Christoffersen informed the group that the great majority of members supported the consensus candidate view. He noted that geographical rotation was also supported, but should be applied on a broader scale, for example, to senior posts within WFP. He proposed an interim arrangement for his deputy, who will become Charge d'Affaires from his departure, as the interim convenor. [Comment. Christoffersen is being transferred without delay to Brussels to work for the Dutch EU Commissioner for Agriculture. End comment] All delegates agreed to this arrangement until a future meeting is held to select the List D chair.

18. (SBU) In a discussion on the margins of a January 16 WFP meeting, Canadian Deputy Permrep Melanson proposed to the DCM that he and Dutch candidate Wermuth take a joint chairmanship of the List D Chair in 2006. Canada would assume immediately the WFP Executive Board Vice President, and the Netherlands would take the Executive Board Presidency in 2007. Melanson said he did not believe that the EU members would eventually agree to a rotation candidate. DCM Cleverley said his initial reaction was that this proposal was unsatisfactory in that it still led to a European taking over the 2007 Executive Board Presidency. Cleverley, nevertheless, added we would think carefully about the Canadian proposal, seek Washington's views, and inform him at a later date.

19. (SBU) Comment: The Ambassador agrees that the Canadian proposal for joint List D Chairmanship is not satisfactory and offers us little to assuage our desire for a non-European successor. Nevertheless we await Washington's views on this. The selection of the List D convenor is more than a blip on the screen and will have to be followed closely. The ploy of the Europeans to seek to control the selection of List D convenor could have far-reaching consequences for U.S. interests should they succeed in obtaining blanket application to senior level positions within WFP, primarily the Executive Director position. End Comment.

HALL